



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes

Town Council

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager
860-441-6630

Mayor James L. Streeter, Councilors Bruce S. Flax, Bill Johnson, Catherine Kolnaski, Deborah B. Monteiro, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Deborah L. Peruzzotti, Paulann H. Sheets, and Harry A. Watson

Tuesday, October 19, 2010

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

I. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher.

Members Present: Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Sheets and Councilor Watson

Members Absent: Mayor Streeter and Councilor Kolnaski

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Office Assistant Lori Watrous.

The Town Clerk called for nominations for Chairman Pro Tem. Councilor Watson was nominated by Councilor Sheets, seconded by Councilor Johnson. There being no further nominations, the vote carried unanimously.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Salute to the Flag was led by Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher.

III. RECOGNITION, AWARDS & MEMORIALS

None.

IV. RECEIPT OF CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

John Valentine, 764 Groton Long Point Road, requested a status report on the leakage problems at Fitch Senior High School. He would like to see quality control during the building phase for all Town projects and defect-free clauses in any future construction contracts.

Phil Butta, 282 Noank Ledyard Road, Mystic, stated that he serves on the Board of Directors for Southeastern Connecticut Television (SECT TV) which has also applied to be the third-party community access television provider. Mr. Butta urged the Council to withdraw its application because he believes that an independent community-based group such as SECT TV should provide this service rather than a municipality. Mr. Butta also stated that he is in favor of the cardiac rehabilitation program.

Helen Rush, 72 Buddington Road, also a member of the Board of Directors of SECT TV, stated that the issue is freedom of speech without interference resulting from political control or involvement. Public access is intended to give voice to the viewing public and some of those views are political or religious in nature.

Ken Peters, 1170 River Road, voiced his support for the supplemental appropriation for River Road construction. Mr. Peters is concerned that River Road has only been open to one-way traffic since March, with repairs not due to be completed until August 2011. He stated that the process for such repairs needs to be revisited. In addition, construction is scheduled for the private water supply to one resident on River Road. Mr. Peters requested that this be delayed until at least one-way alternating traffic can be accommodated.

Wendy Eckholm, 165 Benham Road, does not think that the Town should pursue the acquisition of

public access television, believing it would stifle an independent non-profit business enterprise. The basis of her concern, however, is the possibility of government censorship. In regard to the animal shelter, Ms. Eckholm wonders whether New London will even have an animal shelter facility by the time its contract with Groton expires.

Barbara Reid Collins, 151 Tyler Avenue, believes that Groton's decision to submit its application for cable access television was made in haste without full disclosure to the public. She believes in freedom of speech, and it frightens her to think of censorship by local government.

Terri Roper, 210 Pequot Avenue, Mystic, does not think that Groton will get the cost savings that it anticipates from public access television. She would like the Council to reconsider its decision and withdraw its application. Ms. Roper feels that regionalizing the Animal Shelter is a bad idea, as there is a limited amount of space at the facility already.

Alan Berry, 74 Crown Knoll Court, is concerned by Town Attorney fees relating to Historic District Commission decisions. He believes that it is time to reassess the need for this commission, as he feels that it reaches beyond the scope of its authority and is guided largely by personal taste and preferences.

V. RESPONSES TO CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

The Town Manager stated that he will contact Aquarion Water Company to find out about its project on River Road.

Councilor Sheets would like to see more public discussion regarding public access television, and Chairman Pro Tem Watson noted that there is a referral on this item.

Councilor Flax agreed that it is desirable to discuss public access television more publicly. He is disturbed that those who spoke during citizens' petitions doubted that a Town could operate a public access station without bias. He finds this insulting, and plans to investigate whether there are currently government-owned public access television stations in the country and how they operate. Councilor Flax remarked that everyone who spoke about public access television has an interest in the competing application, and he finds that to be biased as well. Councilor Flax believes that the Department of Public Utility Control (DPUC) will make the appropriate decision based on the applications submitted.

Councilor Monteiro stated that there is a meeting planned with representatives of both the Town Council and the Historic District Commission regarding recent complaints.

Chairman Pro Tem Watson noted that the Council is investigating the leakage problems at Fitch Senior High School but he is not at liberty to discuss anything at this time, as it is in the hands of the Town Attorney.

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

a. Approval of Minutes

2010-0219 Approval of Minutes (Town Council)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council meeting of October 5, 2010 are hereby accepted and approved.

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

b. Administrative Items

2010-0209 Special Trust Fund Contributions

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPECIAL TRUST FUNDS

RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby accepts contributions to the Town as follows:

George Marshall - \$100.00 - Social Services Discretionary

City of Groton Matching Funds - \$298.65 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

2010 CHET Dive into Saving for College Promotion - \$550.00 - Library Discretionary

Kathy Lewis - \$10.00 - Animal Shelter Miscellaneous

Alex Koumanelis \$100.00 - Animal Shelter Miscellaneous

Sue Welch - \$5.00 - Animal Shelter Miscellaneous

Knights of Rizal New London County Chapter - \$50.00 - Library Discretionary

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

c. Deletions from the Town Council Referral List

2010-0216 Cardiac Rehabilitation Program Agreement

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2010-0217 Supplemental Appropriation for River Road Construction

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2010-0218 Year Round Expanded DUI Enforcement Grant

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

Passed The Consent Calendar

A motion was made by Councilor Monteiro, seconded by Councilor Flax, to adopt the Consent Calendar, including all the preceding items marked as having been adopted on the Consent Calendar.

The motion carried unanimously

VII. COMMUNICATION REPORTS (Other than Committee Reports)

a. Town Councilors

Councilor Flax attended the ground-breaking ceremony for the Mystic Streetscape Project.

Councilor O'Beirne received calls regarding providing public access cable television.

b. Clerk of the Representative Town Meeting

At the RTM meeting on October 13, 2010, Luanne DeMatto was elected to fill a vacancy in the Seventh District. The next regular meeting of the RTM will be on November 10, 2010, at the Groton Senior Center.

c. Clerk of the Council

The Town Clerk encouraged those who are not registered to vote to come in and register. Mail-in registrations must be post-marked by October 19, 2010, and walk-in registrations can be done until October 26, 2010.

d. Town Manager

The Town Manager stated that there will be a public information session regarding the Mystic River highway bridge replacement project on October 27, 2010. He mentioned that the first meeting of the Groton Heights School Reuse Committee meeting was on October 18, 2010, and the first meeting of the Noank School Reuse Committee will be on October 23, 2010. The Town Manager reminded citizens that "Annie" will be performed at the Senior Center from October 21-30, 2010, and that the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholarship Trust Fund Dinner will be held on October 21, 2010.

2010-0223 Use of Fitch High School Baseball Field by New England Collegiate Baseball League

USE OF FITCH HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL FIELD BY NEW ENGLAND COLLEGIATE BASEBALL LEAGUE

The Town Manager stated that the Board of Education has had preliminary discussions to explore the possibility of the New England Collegiate Baseball League utilizing the baseball diamond at Fitch Senior High School for 21 games per season.

Chairman Pro Tem Watson requested a referral to the Committee of the Whole for discussion of this item.

e. Town Attorney

No report.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Community & Cultural Development - Chairman Peruzzotti

No meeting, no report.

b. Economic Development - Chairman Johnson

No meeting, no report.

c. Education/Health & Social Services - Chairman Kolnaski

No meeting, no report.

d. Environment/Energy - Chairman Sheets

No meeting, no report.

e. Finance - Chairman O'Beirne

No meeting, no report.

f. Personnel/Appointments/Rules - Chairman Flax

No meeting, no report.

g. Public Safety - Chairman Monteiro

No meeting, no report.

h. Public Works/Recreation - Chairman Watson

No meeting, no report.

i. Committee of the Whole - Mayor Streeter

Chairman Pro Tem Watson stated that the resolutions on tonight's agenda are a result of the last regular Committee of the Whole meeting.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

X. NEW BUSINESS

2010-0216 Cardiac Rehabilitation Program Agreement

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWN MANAGER TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH LAWRENCE AND MEMORIAL HOSPITAL TO CONDUCT A CARDIAC REHAB PROGRAM AT THE GROTON SENIOR CENTER

WHEREAS, the Groton Senior Center has for several years provided a cardiac rehabilitation program for seniors with cardiac issues, and

WHEREAS, declining budget resources resulted in a decision by Parks and Recreation to discontinue the program and offer alternatives to participants, and

WHEREAS, discussions with Lawrence and Memorial Hospital led to the hospital agreeing to administer and conduct the program using the Groton Senior Center and its equipment, and

WHEREAS, an agreement has been reached between the Town and Lawrence and Memorial Hospital outlining the details of the cardiac rehabilitation program, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager or his designated agent is authorized to enter into an agreement with Lawrence and Memorial Hospital to conduct the Cardiac Rehab Program at the Groton Senior Center.

A motion was made by Councilor Sheets, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, that this matter be Adopted.

Chairman Pro Tem Watson noted that many citizens have approached him to thank the Council for acting on this item.

The motion carried unanimously

2010-0217 Supplemental Appropriation for River Road Construction

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION FOR RIVER ROAD REPAIRS

WHEREAS, approximately 150 linear feet of River Road was damaged by flooding in March 2010, closing the road to through traffic, and

WHEREAS, current estimates are \$30,000 to purchase materials that would allow the road to be opened to alternating one-way traffic and \$195,000 to make permanent repairs to the road, and

WHEREAS, funds are not available in the current operating budget to repair the damaged portion of River Road, and

WHEREAS, there are completed capital projects that can be closed out with their remaining funds returned to the Capital Reserve Fund Balance, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that a supplemental appropriation of \$225,000 be appropriated from the Capital Reserve Fund Balance as a FYE 2011 road project for River Road repairs.

Refer to RTM, Rule 6.5.3.

A motion was made by Councilor Peruzzotti, seconded by Councilor Monteiro, that this matter be Adopted and referred under Rule 6.5.3 to the Representative Town Meeting, due back on November 10, 2010.

Councilor O'Beirne requested that this item be expedited.

The Town Manager stated that the RTM received all the background information for this project at its last meeting, and the Town Clerk noted that by referring this item under RTM Rule 6.5.3, it will be expedited. This rule allows the RTM to act on an item at its next regular meeting.

Councilor Johnson stated that, in his opinion, FEMA should be reimbursing 75% of this item.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 6 - Councilor Flax, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Sheets and Councilor Watson
Opposed: 1 - Councilor Johnson

2010-0218 Year Round Expanded DUI Enforcement Grant

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A COMPREHENSIVE DUI ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATION FOR 2010-2011

WHEREAS, the Connecticut Department of Transportation Division of Highway Safety makes funding available to law enforcement agencies to support their DUI enforcement operations that go beyond normal patrol, and

WHEREAS, the 2010-2011 Comprehensive DUI Enforcement Program grant provides for a 75/25 allowable operation expense, and

WHEREAS, matching funds are available in the Groton Town Police Department's alcohol enforcement account, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Manager may apply for a 2010-2011 State DUI grant of up to \$84,500, with the Town to provide matching funds of up to \$21,125.

A motion was made by Councilor Johnson, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 8:33 p.m. was made by Councilor Monteiro, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti and so voted unanimously.

Attest:

*Betsy Moukawsher, Town Clerk
Clerk of the Council*

Lori Watrous, Office Assistant